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Governor Bill Walker
STATE OF ALASKA

May 26, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As you will soon observe first-hand, Alaska has demonstrated decades of exceptional stewardship of one of our country's most productive oil and gas provinces – the Alaska North Slope. In this spirit, I write to you about a longstanding priority and promise for Alaska – safe development within the “1002 Area” or coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). It is high time for this promise to be realized. I ask that you take all administrative actions available to support further characterization of this resource and understanding of the coastal plain. I also ask that you provide full support for Alaska's efforts in the U.S. Congress to allow safe and responsible leasing and development in this limited area.

In the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Congress called on DOI to study the potential for development within the 1002 Area – the north-easternmost, non-wilderness portion of ANWR – and the ensuing DOI report called for conducting a full leasing program in the Area. Since that time, almost every facet of oil and gas development has improved – more comprehensive regulation, more capable technology, and a more complete understanding of long term arctic operations. All of these improvements would provide significant environmental protection for any exploration or development in the area.

Next door to the 1002 Area, on the immediately adjacent State lands of the North Slope, almost 17 billion barrels of oil have been produced and shipped around the world. This has been done with reliable protections for subsistence users and the environment, and a long record of safe operations. This same balance can exist in the 1002 Area with an even smaller footprint. It is time for the federal administration to support, and Congress to act, to realize this opportunity.

My administration is eager to pursue every opportunity with DOI to learn more about the national resources in ANWR. I look forward to your support and partnership as we work to make the promise of ANWR a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Walker".

Bill Walker
Governor